

THE AULD HOOSE OF  
WILLIAM CONNAL & CO.

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## THE AULD HOOSE OF WILLIAM CONNAL & CO.

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AMONG Sir Michael Connal's<sup>1</sup> many sources of pleasure, one was his love of the past. To him old Glasgow and old Stirling were always new: his elaborate papers on the old surroundings of each new Board School were a labour of love;<sup>2</sup> and it was a real pleasure to him to know that his was one of our good old firms. I wonder if he knew how old his firm really was. As William Connal & Co. it is very near its jubilee—a respectable age as things go—but under various styles, in various trades, and with varied fortunes, it can be traced back, through the brilliant Virginian epoch and the great Virginian William Cuninghame, to the very infancy of our foreign trade in the days of George I. No other firm here, not many firms anywhere, have so long a pedigree.<sup>3</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Sir Michael Connal, born in 46 Miller Street, Glasgow, on 11th August, 1817; died at Parkhall, Killearn, on 6th July, 1893.

<sup>2</sup> These papers were quite a feature in the opening of each new Board School. His last of them was written for the opening of the new school in Queen Mary Street, Bridgeton. Sir Michael was now unable for evening engagements, and the paper was read for him by his friend and colleague, Mr. J. H. Kerr. This was on 9th July last. Just before this Sir Michael had worked hard for the Exhibition for the Free Church Jubilee. Some of the most interesting of the exhibits were of his getting, particularly those connected with Bass John.

<sup>3</sup> The good old firm of Hill & Hoggan, generally reckoned our oldest firm, only goes back to 1740—*tempo* George II.—but it still enjoys the unique record of having kept from the start in the same line of business and in the



It dates from 1722. In that year an able young merchant in Ayr, Andrew Cochrane of Brighthouse, son and grandson of merchants in Ayr, gave up his business in Ayr to seek fortune in Glasgow. We can understand his move. We know what Ayr had been in the end of last century—its people sunk in poverty, its streets lined with ruins, its harbour choked with sand, its shipping reduced “to one little boat, the value of fourty pounds Scots, which belonged to one John Campbell,” and the country round “fuller of moores and mosses than townes or people”<sup>1</sup>—and though in 1722 things had mended a little, Ayr was still no place for an able young merchant. It was very different in Glasgow. Thanks to her good use of the *pax Britannica* and of the Union, Glasgow was flourishing; she had almost recovered the 15,000 of population that she had once had, long ago, before the Killing Times; she had taken a grip of the colonial, especially the Virginia trade; she had even sent a vessel of her own across the Atlantic, a vessel of not less than 60 tons, built for herself at Greenock. This was the sort of place for an able young merchant, and here young Cochrane established himself. Glasgow welcomed him, and gave him wealth and consideration, and well he repaid her by the fresh impulse he gave to her trade, and by a long course of public service, especially as Provost in the '45. He was the greatest of all our Provosts. A monument in the nave of the Cathedral records his merits, but his best monument is the “Cochrane Correspondence.”<sup>2</sup> One may read there the story

same family. Sir William Forbes & Co., now imbedded in the Union Bank of Scotland, represents, or represented, the mercantile business of the Coutts's (*unde* Coutts's Bank), which existed in Edinburgh at least as far back as 1696. The present Lord Mayor Tyler is head of a firm that goes back to William and Mary.

<sup>1</sup> Miscellany of the Scottish Burgh Records Society, pp. 28, 78.

<sup>2</sup> The Cochrane Correspondence regarding the Affairs of Glasgow, MDCCXLV.-VI., presented in 1836 to the Maitland Club, by James Smith of Jordanhill, and edited by James Dennistoun of Dennistoun.—We may well be proud of the spirit of Glasgow under Provost Cochrane in the '45. “When for eight weeks the rebels had been masters of Scotland, not one man from Glasgow joined them.” On 30th September Glasgow solemnized the King's birthday “with all manner of rejoycing such as illuminations, bonfires, ringing of bells”; even when the rebels were in actual possession of the town, “the Prince appeared four times publicly in our streets without the smallest respect being paid him; no bells rung, no huzzas, nor did the

of his wisdom and courage and dignity in trying times, and his scorn for the rude Celtic assault on civilization and ordered liberty. Provost Cochrane married Janet Murdoch, daughter of Provost Peter Murdoch, merchant and sugar refiner, and with her brother, Provost John Murdoch, he formed a partnership under the style of

#### I. COCHRANE, MURDOCH & CO.

This famous firm are the direct ancestors of William Connal & Co. They were, to begin with, Virginia merchants,<sup>1</sup> large accord-

meanest inhabitant so much as take off their hats.” When crushing requisitions were laid on the town, “it was hinted that by the Magistrates and principal Burgesses waiting on him, an mitigation might be procured. This they declined; yea, our ladies had not curiosity to go near him, or to a ball held by some of the leaders.” *This no doubt fretted.* And so came of it that Glasgow suffered by far more than any other place in Brittan. It is shameful to read what efforts it cost the brave Provost to recover from the Government at St. James' a tardy and partial indemnification for the losses Glasgow had suffered in the good cause. Smollet (in Humphrey Clinker) speaks of Provost Cochrane as “one of the sages of this kingdom,” and makes Matthew Bramble say that when he was examined in the House of Commons on the Rebellion, “Mr. P—— said he had never heard such a sensible evidence given at that bar.” Sir John Dalrymple (Memoirs of Great Britain and Ireland, Appendix) speaks of him as “eminently wise, and a great mercantile authority”; and Carlyle (Autobiography, p. 73) says that “it was Andrew Cochrane who taught the younger merchants of Glasgow to extend their commerce far beyond what was then dreamt of,” and that his practical knowledge supplied Adam Smith with invaluable materials for the “Wealth of Nations.” Our greatest Provost is faintly commemorated in “Cochrane Street,” the continuation of St. Vincent Street, east of George Square. There was an earlier Cochrane Street—viz., that portion of our George Street which runs from John Street, east to Montrose (originally Inkle) Street. When George Street, which had originally stopped at Balmanno Brae, was opened at the end of last century, east to High Street, the name of George Street was given to the whole line, and the name of Cochrane Street was transferred to the street now so called, and which had first been named Cotton Street (Merchants' House of Glasgow, p. 517, note). Andrew Cochrane died 9th July, 1777, aged 84.

<sup>1</sup> Andrew Cochrane may perhaps have picked up the threads of an old Ayr connection. In his father's time Ayr had had some trade with the Colonies. Among “the burgh of Air ther losses by forraigne trade” in the end of the 17th century was “the ‘James,’ burden 120 tunns, and cargo lost upon the coast of Carrolina, value £13,333 Scots.” The unlucky burgh “had also lost the ‘Swan,’ bounded for the West Indies, of 14 (140 ?) tunn, ship and cargo, value £9000 Scots.”—Miscellany of the Scottish Burgh Records Society, p. 77.



ing to the standard of their day. Then they were shipowners, owning the "Cochrane," the "Murdoch," and the "Prince William."<sup>1</sup> Then, in conjunction with other leading merchants but still as Cochrane, Murdoch & Co., they founded the Glasgow Arms Bank. This was in 1750, in which year Provost John built himself the fine mansion in Argyle Street, which lasted into our own day as the Buckshead Hotel.

Two years before this, in 1748, Cochrane, Murdoch & Co. had taken into their employment an Ayrshire lad, William Cuninghame, son to Bailie Alexander Cuninghame, a thriving merchant in Kilmarnock. They sent him out to Virginia under the usual indenture;<sup>2</sup> he was bound to serve them for three years as "assistant supra-cargoe" howsoever and under whomsoever they should appoint; they were bound to pay his passage out and home, to find him in bed, board, and washing in Virginia, and to give him £5, £10, £15 a year; and he was to have leave to sell in their store goods of his own to the extent of £30 a year. The lad was not without means, having just inherited £300 from his father the bailie,<sup>3</sup> but he had a larger capital in brains. He was sent out at 17; at 19 he was given an independent charge; at 21 he was given full charge of the business in Virginia; at 31 he came home, and became the principal partner with the whole management of the business in Glasgow under the firm of

## 2. WILLIAM CUNINGHAME & Co.

At 49 he finally retired from business, with an ample estate which the family still enjoy.<sup>4</sup> Yet, William Cuninghame's fortunes had been nearly shipwrecked in sight of port.

In 1762, on coming home from Virginia, he had installed in his place his younger brother, Alexander Cuninghame, who had been under him there for years. In the end of 1772 Alexander Cuninghame died. Thereon the then surviving partners of William

<sup>1</sup> Regality Club, 2nd Series, p. 121.

<sup>2</sup> These terms are actually taken from the Indenture, still extant, of William Cuninghame's younger brother Alexander, dated 1757, but we may take for granted that the conditions of service were not better in 1748 than in 1757.

<sup>3</sup> Robertson's Ayrshire Families, i. 318. Paterson's Ayrshire, iii. 580.

<sup>4</sup> The Lainshaw Estate, in Ayrshire, Peeblesshire, and Galloway, is down in the Blue Book of 1872 as over £12,000 a year.

Cuninghame & Co.—William Cuninghame himself, Alexander Houston (of Jordanhill, head of the great West India house of Alexander Houston & Co.), and Robert Bogle (of Shettleston, the "Robin Bogle" of Dr. Alexander Carlyle's Autobiography), assumed a young man then in their employment, Robert Findlay, and the firm became

## 3. CUNINGHAME, FINDLAY & Co.

Robert Findlay was nephew to William Cuninghame; he was son to Robert Findlay, D.D.,<sup>1</sup> and Robert Findlay, D.D., and William Cuninghame were half-brothers, their mother, Barbara Hodgert, having been wife, first to William Findlay, of Waxford, Dr. Findlay's father, and second to Alexander Cuninghame of Brighthouse, William Cuninghame's father.<sup>2</sup> The copartnership deed

<sup>1</sup> Rob. Findlay, D.D., after being successively minister of Stevenston, Galston, Paisley, and the Ramshorn, was in 1783, on the death of Dr. William Wight, appointed to the Divinity Chair in our University. He had been Dean of Faculty ten years before, and he had been a candidate for the Divinity Chair five years before, when Dr. Wight was transferred to it from the Church History Chair. Dr. Findlay died (I think the Father of the Church of Scotland) on 15th June, 1814, in the 94th year of his age, and the 70th year of his ministry. He was able, learned, and assiduous, and lectured faithfully till his last Session, when Principal Taylor took his place, but so exhaustive was his treatment of each topic that it was said after lecturing for thirty years, he had not got to the end of his course. Dr. Findlay was a member of the famous Literary Society, and was author of several Biblical works, especially a *Vindication of the Sacred Books of Josephus from the Misrepresentation of M. de Voltaire*. Glasgow, 1770. His portrait hangs in the Divinity Hall, and "his venerable figure, as he paced his favourite walk in the College Garden, is still (1871) remembered by one of the Professors."—Memorials of the Old College of Glasgow, p. 90.

<sup>2</sup> It is curious that William Cuninghame, as well as Andrew Cochrane, should have been "of Brighthouse." There are two Brighouses. Cuninghame's Brighthouse is on Irvine Water, Riccarton Parish, near Kilmarnock. Cuninghame inherited it from his brother, the Rev. John Cuninghame. Adam Cuninghame, a cadet of Caprington, had acquired it in 1673. Cochrane's Brighthouse (now merged in the estate of Belleisle) is on the low road from Ayr to the Doon, and got its name from the Bridge over the Curtecan or Carrochan burn. Cochrane bought Brighthouse and other lands near Ayr in 1720, before his move from Ayr to Glasgow. In Glasgow he owned Cochrane Lodge, built on a feu from Stobcross. There is some reason to think that the Cochranes of Ayr were cadets of Dundonald.—Paterson's Ayrshire, I. 131-135; III. 580-585; Robertson's Ayrshire Families, I. 318.



of Cuninghame, Findlay & Co. was scarcely signed when the partners made the unpleasant discovery that the firm was wading, or rather swimming for its life. This had come about through the system on which the Virginia trade was now carried on. At first the system had been primitive enough. A "sortable cargo" of such goods—part Scotch, part English—as were considered suitable for the Colonial market was scraped together, and sent out under charge of a "supra-cargoe." At the port he made for it was the supra-cargoe's business to troke these, or as much of these as he could to good account, and to get for them as much tobacco as he could. If he could not clear out or fill up on the James or the Rapahannock, he made for another port, and when he had done his final best he weighed anchor, and steered for the Tail of the Bank. Even under this Sinbad-the-Sailor system the trade paid, but William Cuninghame and others of his mettle worked it on better lines. They opened stores at different colonial centres, and placed these stores under resident factors. It was the business of the factors to order out what goods exactly suited the market, and to have the return cargo ready against their ship's arrival. The stores served the few white outsiders, but their main trade was with the planters who owned the rest of the population. The trade was pretty much one of barter, the planter's own wants and their estate supplies being paid for in tobacco. Planters are an improvident race, and our Virginia merchants had often to give their wares for tobacco that had still to be grown, just as now-a-days our wool or indigo merchants have to advance against next clip or next crop. So conducted, the Virginia trade yielded great profits in and out, but these were earned at two evident risks. 1st. There was the risk on outstandings: it was this loss on outstandings that ruined so many of our Virginians when the crash of the war came.<sup>1</sup> 2nd. The merchant was very much at the mercy of

<sup>1</sup> Bad debts must be reckoned on in all trades, from uncovered advances, but the proportion here was immensely increased by the war. Jefferson puts the case very shortly: "By our separation from Great Britain, British subjects became aliens, and, being at war, they were alien enemies. Their lands were of course forfeited, and their debts irrevocable." More specifically, the "Stay Laws" against the enforcement of debts due to Britishers were justified as a set-off against robberies by the British troops, especially of slaves—said to have been 30,000 of them, mostly Virginians—driven North, and afterwards, contrary to stipulation, shipped off to Canada or the West Indies.

his factors: it was from this quarter that the blow fell on Cuninghame, Findlay & Co. The firm, besides its headquarters at Fredericksburg, had Bladensburg, Portobacco, and many other stores scattered over Virginia and Maryland, with a man in each, buying, and selling, and contracting away, and the blundering and plundering that went on at these stores, especially Bladensburg and Portobacco, had almost brought Cuninghame, Findlay & Co. to ruin. Fortunately Robert Findlay was equal to the occasion. He was but 25, but he had brain and nerve, and he had been thoroughly trained to the business in Virginia under his uncle, Alexander Cuninghame. He at once went back to Virginia, and he stayed there till the Declaration of Independence in 1776 forced him to leave. All direct communication with Great Britain being now interrupted, he made his way to Philadelphia,

Even before the war gave her the chance of *Novae Tabulae*, Virginia had special grievances of her own against us. "Virginia" (Jefferson says) "certainly owed £2,000,000 to Great Britain. At the conclusion of the war I think the State owed near as much as all the rest put together. This is to be ascribed to the peculiarities of the Tobacco Trade. The advances made by the British merchants on tobacco were so great that they spared no means of increasing the consignments. A powerful engine for this purpose was the giving good prices and credit to the planter until he owed more than he could well pay, except by sale of lands and slaves, and lands were low in price. They then reduced the prices of tobacco, so that, let the planters' shipments be large and his demand for necessities ever so economical, he was never permitted to become clear of debt. The debts had become hereditary from father to son for generations, so that 'the planters were a species of property annexed to certain mercantile houses.'" So writes Jefferson; but Jefferson in any question between Britain and any other power—especially his beloved Virginia—must be read *cum grano*.—See Jefferson's Notes on Virginia (New York, 1801), p. 230; Jefferson's Works, IX. 250.

Eventually, under Jay's Treaty, the Stay Laws and all legal impediments to the recovery of British claims were swept away, and those of our Virginians who had ridden the storm, set to to bring to shore what they could of the wreckage. For this purpose, Cuninghame & Co., about 1795, sent out Walter Colquhoun (afterwards of Barnhill, Dumbartonshire), who had been in their service first in Glasgow and afterwards in Virginia; and Colquhoun, in conjunction with Daniel Grinnan of Fredericksburg, Va., was busy for years in looking up the firm's old debtors, and a heartless job it must have been. Finally, in 1802, Lainshaw made a slump offer of the whole outstandings to Daniel Grinnan, who, I believe, accepted the offer, and therewith the Virginian connection of the old firm, after eighty years, ceased and determined.—Board of Green Cloth, privately printed; Glasgow, 1891, p. 119; Old papers *pene* the Grinnan family.



thence to Lisbon, and so home to Glasgow. He had been over three years away, but he had spent the time to good account. He had not only saved the firm, but had made its fortune. In the one year, 1774, when tobacco rose by leaps and bounds, he shipped to the Clyde over 5000 hogsheads, over an eighth of the total import.<sup>1</sup> The profits on these and on his later shipments far outbore the later losses on outstandings, and left both uncle and nephew rich men. Cuninghame was able to build himself for town-house the stately "Lainshaw Mansion," now the front part of our Exchange, and to buy the old Ayrshire estate of the Montgomeries of Lainshaw, and other lands in other shires. Findlay followed at a modest distance his uncle's steps. He bought himself a town-house in Miller Street, then one of the best houses in the town, and he treated himself to a country house, Easterhill, in the pleasant Haughs of Clyde.<sup>2</sup> Both town house and country house were part of the American wreckage: the one had belonged to the Hasties, and the other to the Smellies—both shipwrecked Virginians. Both houses still stand.

In 1780, Cuninghame, Houston and Bogle having retired, the business passed into the hands of Findlay, under the firm of

#### 4. ROBERT FINDLAY & Co.

In 1783, in the first Glasgow Directory, it appears as "Robert Finlay & Co., Merchants, Miller Street." In 1789 it appears as

#### 5. FINDLAY, HOPKIRK & Co.,

the Hopkirk being James Hopkirk of Dalbeth, Easterhill's next-

<sup>1</sup> 3881 hogsheads in name of William Cuninghame & Co., and 1290 in name of Cuninghame, Findlay & Co.; together 5171. The only larger shipper was Alexander Speirs of Elderslie, who had 6035 hogsheads. The total import of tobacco into the Clyde from Virginia, Maryland, and North Carolina for 1774 was a little more than 40,000 hogsheads. Of this, Virginia sent us a little more than 30,000. This was more than half her total average annual export at that date. In 1758 indeed she had produced 70,000 hogsheads, but this was her record. At the date of the war the culture of tobacco was fast falling off, and wheat was taking its place.—Jefferson's Notes on Virginia (New York, 1801), p. 247; Pagan's Glasgow in 1847, p. 81.

<sup>2</sup> Also, in 1778, when the 'Glasgow Royal Volunteers' were raised to put down the Rebels, 'Robert Findlay, Jr.,' subscribed 100 guineas to the regimental fund—a large sum in those days, as large as the subscription of Provost Donald or any of the citizens.—See the list of subscriptions in Glasgow Past and Present (2nd edition), III. 169.

door neighbour. The Hopkirks were well-known people here, in business and in society. James Hopkirk was a Virginian, and son-in-law to the great Virginian John Glassford of Dugaldston; and he had for his town-house the mansion originally built by his predecessor in the firm, Provost John Murdoch, afterwards the Buckshead Hotel. His son, Tom Hopkirk, became later on a partner of Findlay, Hopkirk & Co. After things had settled down in America, some of our Virginians resumed business there on a modest scale, and the hogsheads rolled in once more on Greenock or Port-Glasgow Quay. But many of those who had ridden the storm—Dennistouns, Campbells, Bogles, Hamiltons,—drifted into the West India trade. Among them were Findlay, Hopkirk & Co., and to this West India connection of theirs, their successors owe their present hold of the sugar trade.

In 1802 Robert Findlay died of an accident, in the prime of life. The Hopkirks thereafter retired, and Findlay, Hopkirk & Co. reappeared as

#### 6. FINDLAY, DUFF & Co.

Some of our old merchants will still remember this firm. They were foreign-produce brokers, the largest in Glasgow,<sup>1</sup> and in those days Glasgow had foreign trade that she has now lost—London had not yet grabbed all the Eastern produce, nor Liverpool all the cotton. The partners of Findlay, Duff & Co. were Robert Findlay (II. of Easterhill, son to Robert I.), James Buchanan (afterwards of Blairvaddich), Richard Dennistoun (of Kelvin-grove), Colin M'Lauchlan (a West Indian connection of the Dennistouns), and William Duff (a Banff man, afterwards sent to Liverpool to open a branch house there).

In 1812, Findlay, Duff & Co. assumed William Connal, a young man of 22, who had come to them from Stirling, six years before. They had no cause to regret their rapid promotion of him.

In 1822, Findlay, Duff & Co. became

#### 7. FINDLAY, CONNAL & Co.,

made up of some of the old firm, plus two new partners, James Wright and William Angus. Wright was salesman for the cotton,

<sup>1</sup> That very shrewd old gentleman, Charles Tennant of St. Rollox, sent his son, the late John Tennant, to Findlay, Duff & Co., as the best school to begin his mercantile education.



Angus for the yarn of the Mile-End Spinning Co., now in charge of the firm.<sup>1</sup>

In the crisis of 1826, Findlay, Connal & Co. failed, and, after some interim arrangements, was split up into four distinct firms—"Robert Findlay & Son," "J. & J. Wright," "William Angus & Co.," and "William Connal." The first three are extinct. Robert Findlay & Son (Robert Findlay II. and his son, Robert Findlay, jun., afterwards of Boturich) were merchants—chiefly doing in cotton. The firm, latterly Findlay, Wilson & Co., has disappeared, like most of our cotton firms and most of our cotton trade. Robert Findlay himself had left the firm years before it was given up. He had combined with his own business an agency for the National Bank. In the early '30's this bank agency led to his being offered the management of the Glasgow Bank, succeeding William Roberts, of Dundee, who had succeeded Banker Dennistoun. He accepted the offer, giving up his own business and the National Bank agency. In 1836 the Glasgow Bank absorbed the old Ship Bank, and Robert Findlay continued as manager of the "Glasgow and Ship Bank." In 1843 this bank in its turn was swallowed by the voracious Union, and Robert Findlay finally retired. J. & J. Wright (James Wright and his brother John) were cotton-brokers: they were ruined by their connection with the Lochwinnoch Mills. William Angus & Co. were yarn agents; long extinct. The fourth firm survives in full force.

#### 8. WILLIAM CONNAL

had resumed the produce-broking by himself and in his own name. The business grew on his hands, especially in sugar and tea. The sugar was a legacy from the old West India days of Findlay, Hopkirk & Co.; the tea was Kirkman Findlay's doing. Kirkman Findlay's mercantile genius gave Glasgow an astonishing position in the Eastern and China trade, and there was a time when tea came into the Clyde by cargoes, and the London mail

<sup>1</sup> The Mile-End Spinning Company consisted of three bachelor brothers, originally Balloch youths—Alexander Ewing, James Lindsay Ewing, and John Ewing. They lived in St. Andrew's Square; I think in the very house which Sir Michael Connal afterwards bought as a centre of Christian work, and which he has bequeathed to the Deacon's Court of Free St. James', the congregation of which he was an elder. The Ewings afterwards rented Kelvingrove House; they were its occupants when the town acquired it.

came down crammed with tea-buyers from Mincing Lane to Connal's sales. To facilitate the trade, Connal built in York Street a great bonded tea warehouse, the finest tea warehouse privately owned in Europe or America, and one of the finest buildings in Glasgow.

William Connal was in various enterprises outside his own business. Like his partner, Robert Findlay II., he was an original partner in the Clyde Shipping Co., formed in 1814 to supply steam lighters on the river, and still flourishing in other hands. In partnership with Ross Corbet, of Greenock, he started a line of Calcutta clippers, the "Bucephalus," the "Argaum," the "Deogaum," which made famous passages but infamous dividends, and were finally made over to George Smith & Sons. Moreover, he was an original partner in the Cunard Company. The foundation of the Cunard Company, originally a private copartnership styled the "British and North American Royal Mail Steam Packet Company," was a favourable Admiralty contract for carrying the mails to our North American provinces. Samuel Cunard, of Halifax, afterwards Sir Samuel Cunard, had secured the contract, but he had not capital to work it. Failing to get capital in London, he came here to look for it. After abortive efforts in other directions, he was introduced, through Robert Napier, of Shandon, to George Burns, afterwards Sir George Burns. Burns took the thing up, and set to work to find the capital among his partners and friends. The first outsider that he called on was Connal, who said offhand, "I know nothing of steamers, but if you say it's a good thing, put me down." This was a good beginning. Burns had bargained for a month to raise the capital, but the whole was subscribed in four days. I annex the subscription list as finally adjusted, all Glasgow men except the three Bannermans (Sir James Campbell's brothers-in-law), and David Scott. The subscribers are all now dead. Sir George Burns, the last survivor, died 2nd June, 1890, in his 95th year.

List of partners in the British and North American Royal Mail Steam Packet Company, at 1st February, 1841:—

NAMES.	Shares of £100 each.	Amount.
James Donaldson (Cotton Broker), . . .	160	£16,000
James Browne (Insurance Broker), . . .	116	11,600
James Wright (Cotton Broker), . . .	116	11,600
Thomas Buchanan (Dowanhill), . . .	116	11,600



NAMES.	Shares of £100 each.	Amount.
James Campbell (afterwards Sir James Campbell), . . . . .	60	£6,000
Robert Hinshaw (Cuba Merchant), . . . . .	109	10,900
Alex. Downie (Drysalter), . . . . .	55	5,500
William Brown (Kilmardinny), . . . . .	116	11,600
Robert Napier (Shandon), . . . . .	60	6,000
Robert Rodger (Timber Merchant), . . . . .	116	11,600
William Campbell (Tullichewan), . . . . .	55	5,500
William Leckie Ewing (Arngomery), . . . . .	116	11,600
Archibald MacConnell (Thomson & MacConnell), . . . . .	20	2,000
William Connal (William Connal & Co.), . . . . .	116	11,600
James Burns (G. & J. Burns), . . . . .	50	5,000
George Burns (G. & J. Burns), . . . . .	55	5,500
David MacIver (Burns & MacIver), . . . . .	40	4,000
Charles MacIver (Burns & MacIver), . . . . .	40	4,000
Alexander Fletcher (Calico Printer), . . . . .	116	11,600
Alexander MacAslan (Austin & MacAslan), . . . . .	105	10,500
Alexander MacAslan (in suspense), . . . . .	3	300
William Stirling (Stirling, Gordon & Co.), . . . . .	116	11,600
Elias Gibb (Wine Merchant), . . . . .	64	6,400
Alexander Glasgow (Auchenraith), . . . . .	64	6,400
James Merry, Jun. (Merry & Cuninghame), . . . . .	37	3,700
David Chapman (Thomson & MacConnell), . . . . .	15	1,500
Alex. Bannerman (Henry Bannerman & Sons, Manchester), . . . . .	21	2,100
John Bannerman (Henry Bannerman & Sons, Manchester), . . . . .	21	2,100
Henry Bannerman (Henry Bannerman & Sons, Manchester), . . . . .	21	2,100
David Scott (Merchant, Manchester), . . . . .	16	1,600
James Martin (of James Martin and J. & G. Burns), . . . . .	15	1,500
James MacCall (Daldowie), . . . . .	13	1,300
Alexander Kerr (Robertland), . . . . .	7	700
British Partners, . . . . .	2150	£215,000
Samuel Cunard (Halifax, N.S.), . . . . .	550	55,000
Total stock, . . . . .	2700	£270,000

William Connal carried on the produce business by himself and in his own name till 1845, when he assumed his nephews, Michael Connal (our Michael, son of his brother, Michael Connal) and William Connal (now of Solsgirth, son of his brother Patrick Connal). With them he formed the existing firm of

#### 9. WILLIAM CONNAL & Co.

William Connal died suddenly, in 1856, in his 67th year, at his friend Peter Buchanan's shooting quarters, Glenmurchie, Forfarshire. At the time of his death he was Dean of Guild for the second time. The Dean of Guildship was hereditary in his firm. Robert Findlay I. had been Dean in 1797, Robert Findlay II. in 1819, and William Connal himself in 1851. In 1855, Robert Baird of Gartsherrie had been chosen Dean, but died in office on 7th August, 1856, and according to rule William Connal, as an ex-Dean, was chosen interim Dean, on 22nd August; three days later, on 25th August, he died; and on 9th September, ex-Dean William Brown of Kilmardinny was chosen interim Dean to serve to the close of the official year, in October. William Connal had married—1st, Frances Wright, daughter of William Wright of Broom, an old Stirlingshire family; 2nd, Margaret Turner, sister of Angus Turner, town-clerk of Glasgow, but he had no children by either wife.

In 1864 the business was again split up. The character of it had by this time changed. There was less general produce and much less tea; there was more sugar, and a new iron department had opened out to the firm, first as brokers, then as storekeepers to the trade. William Connal had had charge of the iron department, and now took it over under the new firm of Connal & Co.<sup>1</sup> Michael Connal retained the rest of the business under the old firm of William Connal & Co.

In 1862 William Wilson (a son of the Manse, now the respected senior of the firm), and in 1879 John Campbell and J. C. Gibson (sons of the Rock), became partners in the old firm. In their hands the good name of William Connal & Co. is safe, but with Michael Connal's death its special flavour is gone.

Michael Connal was never wersh, but he was a special treat in his old office, above all in old days when he conducted his periodical sales. The produce he was offering had been entrusted to him for sale, and if the bidders were slow to bid what he thought the owner ought to have, he was visibly put about, and he would reason with them, scold them, appeal to them, and in the end do as well for his client as if he had run the bid or practised the little tricks of the auction-box.

<sup>1</sup> The iron department had been carried on under the firm of M. & W. Connal & Co., in which William Connal, the uncle, was not a partner.



His business was very laborious. For many years he was in his office before his neighbours were at breakfast, and in his office after his neighbours were at dinner, and his only holiday was given to the Fair-week trip, personally conducted, of his beloved "Spouts;"<sup>1</sup> but on the top of his business labours he managed by some hydraulic process of his own to compress an amount of public work, educational, social, charitable, religious, that would have staggered David Dale,<sup>2</sup> and he finished off the pile with some ornamental work in the shape of botany, natural history, archæology, general literature, and a few other trifles.

He had his faults—"if ye come to stricts, wha o' oorsells has na'?" He liked his own way—as men will, who have thought the thing out—and if he did not get it, he was pretty obstinate, and a temper, naturally quick, would come out in little spirits of testy humour. But he was one of those few men with whom it is impossible to quarrel—he was so transparently honest and disinterested. There never was a man more free from self-seeking, or even self-consciousness. "It's braw to see a man

<sup>1</sup> "Spouts" or "Spoutonians," the members of his "Spoutmouth Bible Institute." The Spoutmouth, off the Gallowgate, was in his elder's district, and here on the 10th June, 1848, he founded the Institute which for the 45 years left him was his favourite work. The name gives no idea of the quality of the Institute, which was made up of Bible plus Mechanics' Institute, plus Toynbee, plus Penny Savings' Bank, plus Fresh-Air Fortnight. The last was quite a feature of this Institute. Himself a lover of nature, Michael Connal first set the fashion of taking poor people out of the smoke into the fresh air, and giving the dwellers in our lanes and closes a sight of the green fields and the trotting burns, and a whiff of the sea and the heather. The first summer after founding the Institute he took a band of young Spouts to Garelochhead, walked them over the hills by Whistlefield to Coulpport, and fetched them home in a tug. Out of this modest beginning grew his annual fair week's excursions to Arran, the Bass, Iona, etc., with scenery, botany, geology, archæology, dooking, and delights untold. Some opposition came at first from the Sabbath School Union, who feared that these trips would lead to Sabbath desecration, but the very opposite has been the result.

<sup>2</sup> It was astonishing how hot he kept all his irons. He was methodical and an early riser, and he had a remarkable power of concentration; he was oblivious, for the time, of everything but the thing in hand, and whatever work one met him over, this seemed to be the one interest he had at heart. He was not exactly a man of "wecht" (in Dr. Chalmers's phrase), but he generally carried people with him from his always knowing his facts and his own mind. In some of his enterprises he worked through a staff that he had bred himself, and that swore by him.

like Moses, his face to shine, an' him no ken't": it might have been of Michael Connal that the old minister said it. When the Queen knighted him, I suppose he was the only man in Glasgow that was surprised, and he only accepted the honour as paid not to him, but to the educationalists of Scotland, whom he happened at the moment to represent. No honour that has come Glasgow way has met a heartier approval, but with the approval just a little amusement mingled; we smiled to think of one of such simplicity of character carrying a title about. He carried it easily; title or no title was all one to him; but we were the gainers. The title secured us of his being asked, as a matter of course, to all public functions; he was of a social turn, and he came when he could, and he was often requisitioned for a speech. His speeches were always a treat. He was not as terse as Mr. Sexton's countrymen, but he was always ready, always racy, always kindly, full of quaint memories of the past, full of enviable hopefulness for the future, Michael Connal all over. We shall get no more such speeches.

As they buried the old man—in the shadow of the Hie Kirk—a great company of mourners stood round the grave. It was noticed how many little groups of them were strangers to all the rest; it was that the company was drawn from all the bodies of men with whom he had worked in this good cause or that, and he had worked in so many that no one, not even Mr. Strang of the Charity Organisation, could follow him through them all.

It was noticed, too, that the mourners included Christian ministers of all the Churches, Romish priests among them. Sir Michael Connal was no latitudinarian; he had a definite deep-founded religious creed, and built his life on it; but he had the idea, and held to it with characteristic obstinacy, that Christian men ought to dwell on the points they have in common rather than on the points they differ on. He was so little of a sectary, so held aloof from sectarian jangles and jealousies, that one might know him for years without knowing to which branch of the Church Catholic he belonged. As a matter of fact, he was a Free Churchman of 50 years' standing, a devout member and a faithful elder, but a Free Churchman of the obsolete Chalmers type, obsolete and disparaged.<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> I sometimes picture Dr. Chalmers as coming down from the General Assembly of the First-born and presenting himself at the General Assembly of the Free Church, and I always wonder what reception they would give him.



Sir Michael Connal was a laird, a considerable laird; few knew it, for he took no territorial title. He owned two estates, both in Stirlingshire, both bought from sentiment. Parkhall, which his father had had to part with in 1826, came into the market in 1858, and was eagerly bought back by Sir Michael. It was an old-fashioned place, just such as he loved, and it had been his home as a boy, but it was not for himself that he bought it, but for his widowed mother. He handed it over to her with the very furniture still in it—he had got it all back—that had been there when she had had to leave it 30 years before; and I doubt if Daylesford recovered gave as keen a pleasure to Warren Hastings as Parkhall recovered gave to Michael Connal. In 1882 he had a like pleasure in buying back Arngomery, which had been the patrimonial estate of his wife's father, William Leckie Ewing.<sup>1</sup>

Sir Michael was as familiar a figure in our streets, east or west, as King William at the Cross—the little round man, the bag and the umbrella, the brisk step—not brisk of late years—the quick, kindly eye—quick and kindly to the last. When on his ordinary rounds, he was not careful of his dress or his belongings—he could please himself then—but if gentlemen did him the honour to offer him hospitalities, public or private, it

<sup>1</sup> The Blue-Book of 1872 gives Parkhall as 184 acres, £223 10s. rental, and Arngomery as 541 acres, £1,054 1s. rental. There has been some addition since to Parkhall. When Sir Michael bought back Parkhall, old Dr. Graham, of Killearn, was so pleased that he “improved the occasion” next Sunday. Parkhall had been bought by Sir Michael's father in 1818. It had belonged to Archibald Fletcher, father of Miles Fletcher, both well-known members of the old Scotch Whig party, and Mrs. Archibald Fletcher, in her delightful “Autobiography,” tells of the happy life at Parkhall from 1813 to 1818. It was twenty miles away from anywhere, and they communicated with the outer world by the Glasgow carrier, who once a week brought them their bread, their groceries, and their letters. The drawback was the prevalence of illicit distilling, and the consequent demoralization of the country folk; the workers at the new cotton mills at Balfron were a very decent lot. William Leckie Ewing of Arngomery was a man well known and well liked, an active partner in the West India firm of Stirling, Gordon & Co., and a leader of the Glasgow Tories. Arngomery had belonged to his mother's family, the Leckies. He sold it before his death, in 1866, to Michael Jamieson, merchant in Glasgow, from whose representatives Sir Michael bought it in 1882. Sir Michael's mother enjoyed the recovered Parkhall for 17 years; she died there in 1875, having been 46 years a widow.

was another matter, and his scrupulous attire and punctilious courtesy spoke the gentleman of the old school.

Sir Michael Connal's virtues are not extinct; we have men still left us whose word is as good as their bond, and whose hearts are set on making the world better and happier; but never another Sir Michael Connal can we hope for:—

“Oh! we ne'er shall see the like of Captain Paton no mo!”

Sir Michael Connal was a “Son of the Rock.” The Connals of Stirling, said to have come from Argyll, are found in Stirlingshire in the sixteenth century, a sturdy, capable race who had their share of the kicks and of the coppers. In the evil Stuart days they were Covenanters, fought at Bothwell Brig, and suffered therefor in purse and person. In the revival of Scotland after the Union they became flourishing traders. Patrick Connal, born in 1715, Burgess and Guild Brother of Stirling, married Isabel Downie, daughter of *Michael* Downie, merchant in Stirling, and granddaughter of Provost James Christie, and had with other children two sons, *Michael* of Stirling, and Ebenezer of South Carolina. Michael Connal, born in 1752, was a merchant in Stirling, and at the same time had Government contracts for clothing the Highland regiments, had large dealings with the Irish linen trade, and imported cargoes of rice and other produce from his brother's house in Carolina. Further, he inherited shares in the Stirling Bank from his cousin William Christie, an original partner, and he took an active part in the management of the bank. Outside of his own affairs, he gave much time to the affairs of Stirling; he was Dean of Guild, and he was repeatedly Provost, dying in office in 1812. His death was characteristic. He was a keen Whig, keen in politics as in everything else, and he died—amid general regret—of overwork in a Parliamentary fight for the Stirling Burghs.

Provost Connal married Marion Glas, sister of Provost John Glas, and daughter of John Glas, of Stirling, and Marion Burn, related to the Burns of Coldoch. By her he had seven sons, of whom

(1.) Patrick Connal (father of William Connal, now of Solsgrith), banker in Stirling. In his hands Cousin Christie's shares in the Stirling Bank turned out a *damnosa hereditas*: in



the crisis of 1826 (the same that brought down Findlay, Duff & Co.), the Stirling Bank failed, and Patrick Connal was ruined.<sup>1</sup> He was afterwards the much-respected agent in Stirling for the National Bank.

(2.) *Michael* Connal (father of our Michael), bred in the Stirling Bank, joined the East India Company's naval service, made money, bought Parkhall, near Killearn, lost money with friends, sold Parkhall, returned to India, and died there in 1829. In voyaging to and fro he often touched at St. Helena; he was one of the few that Napoleon allowed to see him, and among many relics preserved at Parkhall is an order initialled by Napoleon. Michael Connal's wife, our Michael's mother, was Eliza Wright, daughter of William Wright of Broom, and sister of Frances Wright, first wife of his brother, William Connal.

(3.) William Connal, of William Connal & Co., of whom already.

(4.) Robert Connal, in the Liverpool branch of Findlay, Duff & Co.: died young.

The old office in Virginia Buildings is hardly in keeping, by modern standards, with such a firm as Wm. Connal & Co., but Michael Connal had grown to it like Theseus to his rock. He had been born on the spot, he had spent his whole business life there, and next door was his beloved Stirling's Library, an institution which only his close-fisted management over 37 years has preserved to us. The Virginia Buildings property forms an L-shaped block fronting Virginia Street (Nos. 37 to 55) and Miller Street (Nos. 42 and 46). The Virginia Street front stands on the two northernmost stances in Buchanan of Mount Vernon's original building-plan of Virginia Street, west side. In the middle of last century two detached houses in the quaint style of the period were built on these two stances, and as the two stances across the street belonged to them and were kept as gardens, the two houses had a very fine view all the way to Candleriggs. The northernmost of the two had also a fine view into the grounds of the Virginia mansion at the top of

<sup>1</sup> The Stirling Banking Company, founded 1777, failed 1826, ultimately paid its creditors in full, and some of the partners had something left. The bank's agents here were James and Robert Watson, well-known private bankers.

Virginia Street. This northernmost house was built by Alexander Speirs of Elderslie, and after him belonged, one after another, to George Oswald of Scotstoun, Provost John Dunlop of Rosebank, John Brown, merchant in Glasgow, and James Dennistoun of Colgrain. Finally, James Dennistoun sold it in 1808 to Findlay, Duff & Co. The southernmost house was built by Provost John Bowman of Ashgrove in 1754, and occupied by him till his ruin, 40 years after. Provost Bowman's was a hard case. He had been one of the founders of the Glasgow Arms Bank, a private copartnery; this bank failed in the crisis of 1793: Provost Bowman had retired years before, but he had not advertised out, and he was, of course, liable for the bank's debts; these debts were paid in full (according to the etiquette of Glasgow failed banks), but Provost Bowman and the other partners were half or wholly ruined. The house was sold in 1799 (by the trustee, Walter Ewing M'Lae of Cathkin) to John Lang, writer, and afterwards Dean of Faculty. And John Lang sold it in 1816 to Findlay, Duff & Co. The Miller Street front of the Virginia Buildings property consisted of the old house still standing as No. 42 Miller Street, and of a carriage entry leading along the north side of it to its back offices. The owners of this house had been as unlucky as their neighbour, Provost Bowman. The site of it formed one of the plots in Miller of Westerton's original building-plan of Miller Street, and was bought in 1772 from Westerton by Robert Hastie, of Robert & Walter Hastie, big Virginians. Robert Hastie bought the plot with the view of building himself a house there. But in the Virginian crash Robert & Walter Hastie failed—they were about the first couple to lead down the dismal dance—and in 1775 their trustees sold the Miller Street plot, unbuilt on, to John Craig, wright. John Craig just managed to build the house, and then he failed, and in 1780 his trustees sold the house to Robert Findlay I. of Easterhill. Robert Findlay I. had it thereafter as his town house, and his son, Robert Findlay II., was born in it in 1784. On the death of Robert I. in 1802, Robert II. succeeded to it as owner and occupier. Finally, he sold it in 1816 to himself and the other partners in Findlay, Duff & Co.

Findlay, Duff & Co., thus owning the whole of the L-shaped block from Virginia Street to Miller Street, proceeded to recon-



struct it. It had been their *locus* from 1780, when Robert Findlay fitted up the counting-house of his firm in the back offices of his house in Miller Street. Then Findlay, Hopkirk & Co. appear in 1789 as "merchants, counting-house back of Mr. Findlay's house" (no need to specify which Mr. Findlay or which house). Then Findlay, Duff & Co. hung out their sign in one of the two Virginia Street houses—I think the northernmost, their first purchase. Then, on purchasing the other Virginia Street house and the Miller Street house, they pulled down both Virginia Street houses, and on the site of them and of the back offices of the Miller Street house they erected "Virginia Buildings," a large block, with the front to Virginia Street, and two long wings stretching towards Miller Street. They gave the block an entry to Virginia Street (now No. 43) by an arched pen through the Virginia Street front, and a through-gang to Miller Street (now No. 46), by utilizing the carriage entry to the back offices of Mr. Findlay's house. The new buildings gave Findlay, Duff & Co. ample premises for their own use, counting-house, and sale-room, and a large cotton store, and left them with plenty to let of office and warehouse property in the heart of the business quarter of the day. These arrangements continued till the firm, now become Findlay, Connal & Company, failed in 1826. The whole property had then to be sold, and it was bought in 1828 by the Thistle Bank. The Thistle Bank let out the property, and Robert Findlay & Sons, J. & J. Wright, William Angus & Co., and William Connal, the four firms into which Findlay, Connal & Company had split up, remained among their tenants in Virginia Buildings. William Connal's quarters were the same as Findlay, Duff & Co. had constructed for their own occupation, and the same as William Connal & Co. occupy now, in the south wing of Virginia Buildings, one stair up. J. & J. Wright and William Angus & Co. were at the bottom of Connal's stair, Wright on the left, and Angus on the right as you enter. Robert Findlay & Co.'s office for their own business and for the National Bank agency was across the court, in the north wing of Virginia Buildings, one stair up; they also rented the cotton store, still standing in the court north of this wing entering by No. 59 Virginia Street. In 1836 the Thistle Bank sold the whole Virginia Buildings property to Misses Helen Mary and Elizabeth Brown of Crossflat, near Paisley, whose representatives still own it, letting it out in

portions. But the old Miller Street house has never been divided. Robert Findlay left it after his sale of it to Findlay, Duff & Co. in 1816, and William Connal, who had lived round the corner in Ingram Street, came to it. William Connal lived in it till the sale to the Thistle Bank in 1828. Since 1828 it has had various occupants, among them the City and Suburban Gas Company; but till this year it has remained little changed outside or in, and outside it still stands just as it came from the hands of poor John Craig in 1780, the sole surviving specimen of the antique Miller Street architecture. In this old house, then occupied by William Connal, Sir Michael Connal was born on 11th August, 1817. William Connal & Co.'s counting-house in Virginia Buildings is immediately to the east of the old house, Sir Michael's private room stands on the site of his predecessors' counting-house of 1780, and its windows look into the window of the room he was born in. No wonder he clung to Virginia Buildings.



